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THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT, WITH THE INVENTORY OF THE ESTATE, OF MAISTER PETER LOWE, FOUNDER OF THE FACULTY OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS, GLASGOW.

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When I published *An Account of the Life and Works of Maister Peter Lowe* (Glasgow, 1889), I had to leave the date of his death uncertain; at that time no trace of his will had been found. While searching the "Commissariat of Glasgow, Testaments, Vol. 7," for some other purpose, Mr. A. W. Gray Buchanan noticed, about two years ago, the will of the founder of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, and he kindly directed my attention to it. A transcript of the MS. was easily obtained from the Register House, Edinburgh. It is headed "The Testament Testamentar, latter will and Inventar of the guidis and geir perteining to vmquhile Mr. Petir Low doctour chyrurgin within the towne of Glasgow quha deceist upoun the fyftein day of August the zeir of God j^{m} vj^{c} and ten zeiris."

This, then, fixes the date of his death beyond all doubt; but the confusion which beset former inquiries still haunts us. When we were disposed to trust to the "Index Funereus" of the Surgeons of Paris, which gave his death as occurring on 30th June, 1617, we subsequently discovered that his widow was married again about two years before his death! For the date of this marriage there were clear records. Now that we know that he died on 15th August, 1610, we are confronted with the difficulty that he died more than two years before he wrote the preface to the second edition of his *Chyrurgerie!* His preface, he states, is given from "my house in Glasgow, the 20. day of December in the yeare of our Lord God. 1612," and it is signed with his own name.

The explanation is, no doubt, to be sought in the MS. of the

revised copy of his *Chyrurgerie* being sent up to his publisher (Thomas Purfoot) in London by his executors about the time the will was confirmed in January, 1611, so that it might be published for the benefit of his son "John," to whom had been left, among other things, "certain buiks and instrumentis belanging to his croft." The "Presages of Hippocrates," issued with this treatise, bears the date 1611; the preface to this, signed by Peter Lowe, is dated from his "owne house in Glasgow, the 7. day of November, 1611." The larger work would take longer time to pass through the press, especially as many illustrations appeared in this edition for the first time. The introduction of these illustrations, as I stated in my memoir (p. 34), "seems to have been an afterthought, as there is little allusion, if any, to the figures by Peter Lowe in his text." The publisher, or his adviser, in issuing the second edition, probably introduced these illustrations, mostly of instruments, copied from well-known sources, as likely to add to the interest of the volume; in printing the prefaces they seem to have put in the date at which they were being printed, regardless of the author's MS., and ignoring the fact of his death. Even modern publishers, sometimes, by way of giving freshness to an edition, have been known to put on the new year some months before it arrived. This explains, so far, the absence of any reference in the text to the numerous illustrations in this second edition.

The next point of importance which is brought out in the Testament is that Peter Lowe had been married twice, for "there was a contract of mariage betuix Mr. David Wemis ["the Parson of Glasgow"] and him that Helein Wemis his docter now his spous should have nane of his guidis nor geir quhill his first wyffis bairnes were payit of sevin thousand and fywe hundredth merkis." This sum is made over in the will (with detailed statements of how it is made up) to his son "John;" from this it appears that he was not a son of "Helen Wemyss," the second wife. Mention is made in the will (executed two days before he died) of this son's tutors, whom he named; and arrangements are made in his provision for his wife for "the honest interteinment of his sone and haulding of him at the schuill during the said space [four years] at the sicht of his saidis tutoris." From all this we gather that his son, by his first wife, was under age at the time of his father's death.[1]

[1] This confirms the view I took (p. 3) that although his son "John" figures as an "interloquutor" in the second edition of the *Chyrurgerie*, he was much too young to be learning this art.

Provision is also made for his daughter "Christiane" during her minority, or till she was married, or after the death of his wife. From her provision being quite distinct from the 7,500 merks laid aside for the "first wiffis bairnes," we may assume that she was a daughter of Helen Weymss. Some provision is likewise made (500 merks) for his sister "Helen Low."

This "Testament and Latter Will" was signed on 13th August, 1610, two days before he died; but it had to be signed for him, with all due formalities, by a notary, "beeaus he doeht not wrytt himslff." Apparently the will was made when he was almost *in extremis*, although it is evident that he was quite clear in his mind, as the intricate details of his property are "pairtlie maid and gevin up be his awin mouth."

It may be of some interest to know how much the estate of a celebrated Glasgow surgeon amounted to at that time. The Inventory with the debts owing to him, less the debts owing by him, amounted to five thousand five hundred and sixty-two pounds eight shillings and eight pence Scots—a very serious qualification![1] In addition to this, however, there was some landed property—"His foir tenement of land heich and laich with the haill zaird;" the testator estimated this at 4,000 merks, in devising it to his son as part of the 7,500 merks to which he was entitled. Further, he had "twa back tenementis of land heich and laich in the clois;" the value of these is not given, but no doubt it was distinctly less than the front tenements.

His wife, by the will, had these back tenements in life-rent, and she had the life-rent of most of his free money (after providing for the son's 7,500 merks), with reversion to his daughter or his nearest heirs.

As an interesting feature of the times regarding investment of funds, it may be stated that his money was lent out to various well-known people, with supplementary cautioners, viz., to Alexander Colquhoune of Lusse, £666, 13s. 4d.; Johnne Campbell of Ardinkynlas, £333, 6s. 8d.; late Robert Lord Sempill, £1,000; my Lord of Glasgow, £1,000; Robert Hamiltone of Goslingtowne knyeht, £2,000; James Crawfurd of Fermis, £133, 6s. 8d. A few other small debts are enumerated as owing to him, and it is interesting to find among them £26, 13s. 4d. as "ane half-zeiris pentione quhilk

[1] About £463 sterling. A pound Scots is reckoned one-twelfth of a pound sterling, or 1s. 8d. sterling. A merk was 13s. 4d. Scots, or 1s. 1⅓d. sterling. An approximation to the present day value of money may be made by multiplying by ten.

the defunct had of the toune of Glasgow." (The reader must always remember that these are pounds Scots.[1]) This payment by the town does not appear in the published accounts of the town, or it might have led to the fixing of the date of his death. The last entry of Peter Lowe in these accounts of the town was on 26th May, 1610, for forty pounds as his fee for "bowelling" the laird of Houston; this was only a few months before Peter Lowe's death.

"James Elphinstone of Woodsyde and Archibald Mwir mertchand burges of Glasgow" are nominated as his executors. "Sir James Sempill of Biltreis knycht, James Forret of Barrowfield, James Elphinstone of Woodsyde, and the said Archibald Mwir conjunctlie" are nominated as "tutoures testamentaris to his sone Johne Low." Other three are named as "tutouris testamentaris" for his daughter.

[1] See previous foot note.

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